

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WARSAW 02887 221522Z

64

ACTION EUR-25

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RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 OMB-01 SSC-01 SAJ-01 SS-20

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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9142

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL POZNAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 2887

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PL, VT

SUBJECT: KAZIMIERZ KAKOL TO HEAD RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OFFICE

ROME FOR ILLING

1. THE CENTRAL PRESS ANNOUNCED MAY 22 THAT KAZIMIERZ KAKOL, LONG-TIME EDITOR OF THE LAWYERS WEEKLY PRAWO I ZYCIE, HAS BEEN NAMED AN UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE AND DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. A CC CANDIDATE MEMBER SINCE DECEMBER 1971, KAKOL WILL REPLACE ALEKSANDR SKARZYNSKI, FOR WHOM NO FUTURE ASSIGNMENT WAS INDICATED IN THE BRIEF PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT.

2. AN ACKNOWLEDGED PARTY HARD-LINER, KAKOL SUPPORTED THE MOCZARITES DURING THE 1968 INTRA-PARTY STRUGGLES. IN PARTICULAR, HE AND HIS NEWSPAPER SPEARHEADED THE ANTI-SEMITIC CAMPAIGN DURING THAT PERIOD. HOWEVER, KAKOL SEEMS SUCCESSFULLY TO HAVE WEATHERED AND DIFFICULTIES HIS SUPPORT OF MOCZAR SUBSEQUENTLY BROUGHT HIM AND HAS APPEARED TO BE IN STEP WITH THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP, FOR WHICH HE PROFESSES GREAT ADMIRATION. HE HAS REMAINED ACTIVE IN PARTY, LABOR, YOUTH, AND VETERANS AFFAIRS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 WARSAW 02887 221522Z

ADDITIONALLY, HIS NEWSPAPER HAS TAKEN POLEMICAL STANDS ON

POLISH-FRG RELATIONS, NATO, RFE, AND RELATED TOPICS.

3. PREVIOUS EMBASSY ASSESSMENTS SUGGEST THAT KAKOL HAD SERVED GIEREK AS A TOKEN CONSERVATIVE TO PLACATE THAT ELEMENT OF THE PARTY. HOWEVER, HIS ASSIGNMENT TO THE SENSITIVE RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS POST IS ANYTHING BUT TOKEN, MOREOVER, IT FOLLOWS OTHER RECENT HIGHER-LEVEL APPOINTMENT TO KEY POSITIONS OF MEN GENERALLY REGARDED AS IDEOLOGICALLY CONSERVATIVE--WERBLAN AND KRASKO-- AND COULD BE READ AS CONFIRMING A TREND TOWARD IDEOLOGICAL TIGHTENING ON VARIOUS DOMESTIC FRONTS. KAKOL HIMSELF IS A PROPONENT OF SUCH TIGHTENING, BUT HE REPORTEDLY ASSURED A BRITISH DIPLOMAT RECENTLY THAT HIS SHOULD NOT TAKE THE FORM OF A "CRACKDOWN" ON WESTERN INFLUENCES, BUT RATHER OF SHARPENED CRITICISM OF SUCH INFLUENCES AND STRENGTHENING OF THE HOME-GROWN PRODUCTS. IN ANY CASE, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO CONCLUDE THAT KAKOL'S APPOINTMENT CONFIRMS WHAT SOME HAVE INTERPRETED AS GROWING SIGNS OF A SHARP SHIFT TO THE RIGHT.

4. KAKOL'S APPOINTMENT, HOWEVER, WILL NOT BE WELCOMED AMONG CHURCH CIRCLES HEREOR AMONG POLISH JEWS AT HOME OR ABROAD. THOUGH PROFESSEDLY CONCERNED ABOUT "EQUALITY," (SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS," AND MORALITY, THEMES WHICH ARE OF CONCERN TO THE POLISH CLERGY, KAKOL CAN BE EXPECTED TO BARGAIN HARD ON CHURCH-STATE ISSUES. WE WERE TOLD IN MARCH THAT SKARZYNSKI, ALSO REGARDED AS AN ARCH-CONSERVATIVE AND NOT EXACTLY A FAVORITE IN CHURCH CIRCLES, WAS PERSONALLY ON THE DECLINE. (HOWEVER, SOME CHURCHMEN HAVE SPOKEN FAVORABLE ABOUT SKARZYNSKI'S PERSONAL REASONABLENESS, WHEN DECISION ON ISSUES OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE HAVE BEEN HIS TO INFLUENCE OR MAKE. HE IS ALSO CREDITED WITH HAVING TAKEN A NEUTRAL STAND DURING THE 1968 CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE JEWS AND WITH HAVING HELPED CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL JEWS WHO WERE IN DIFFICULTIES.) MOREOVER, HIS OFFICE HAD REPORTEDLY LOST THE ACTION ON WARSAW-VATICAN NORMALIZATION TO THE MFA, AND CHURCH-STATE TALKS HAVE BEEN AT A VIRTUAL STANDSTILL FOR NEARLY A YEAR.

5. KAKOL IS AN ACTIVIST AND HIS APPOINTMENT MAY PORTEND NEW REGIME INITIATIVE IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS. IF SO, HIS OWN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NEW APPROACH CAN HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO

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PAGE 03 WARSAW 02887 221522Z

BE CONCILIATORY.
DAVIES

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